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Letter dated 9 May 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Thank you for convening the annual briefing to the Security Council of the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Armenia welcomes the Ukrainian Chairmanship's briefing and extends its warm welcome to Mr. Leonid Kozhara, Foreign Minister of Ukraine, in his capacity as Chairman-in-Office.

We took note with appreciation of the readiness of the Ukrainian Chairmanship to contribute to the resolution of the existing conflicts in the OSCE area and would like to highlight that every conflict situation and its resolution are unique and require continuity, consistency and expertise of mediators.

I draw to your attention and that of the members of the Council that Azerbaijan once again used the Security Council briefing format to advance its narrow political agenda, presenting an entirely distorted picture of the Nagorno Karabakh issue, the ongoing peace process, root causes and genesis of the conflict as well as a wishful interpretation of the Security Council resolutions and presidential statements.

Azerbaijan, which refers to the above-mentioned resolutions in a self-serving manner, should be reminded that at the time of their adoption it refused to comply with the key provisions therein, which urged the parties concerned to reach and maintain a durable ceasefire. The main goal of those resolutions was the establishment of a ceasefire and the ending of hostilities, which, unfortunately, was not reached at that time because of Azerbaijan's destructive position. By doing so, the Azerbaijani side obstructed the timely implementation of the resolutions and nullified their intended effect.

In addition, through the fallacious statement, the Azerbaijani representative also attempted to misinform the members of the Council on the work and conclusions of the 2005 and 2010 missions of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs to the surrounding territories of Nagorno Karabakh. What the Azerbaijani side alleges is taken out of the context of the overall findings and is being misused for propaganda purposes.

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The reports of the above-mentioned missions clearly state that there is no state policy of settlement on these territories. The following are excerpts from the reports:

- there is "no clear organized resettlement, no non-voluntary resettlement [and] no recruitment".
- "the overwhelming majority of ('quite limited') settlements are displaced persons from various parts of Azerbaijan, notably from Shahumian, Getashen — now under Azerbaijani control — and Sumgait and Baku".
- there is "no evidence of direct involvement by the authorities of Armenia in the territories".

There is ample evidence from eyewitnesses, as well as photographs and films, further substantiated by the statements of a number of diplomatic missions accredited in Azerbaijan about the systematic acts of vandalism by the Azerbaijani authorities. One of the gravest violations in this regard is Azerbaijan's destruction of the medieval Armenian cemeteries, churches and other sacred sites in the town of Djulfa and other places. Furthermore, their destruction at a time and on territories where there is no war or conflict can only be qualified and condemned as intentional acts of vandalism planned by the authorities, who continue to display profound contempt towards human values and heritage.

Regrettably, the performance of Azerbaijan in the Security Council proves once again that the derailment and undermining of the Nagorno Karabakh peace process remains the sole objective of the Azerbaijani leadership, carried out by the continuous and explicit threats to use force against the civilians of Nagorno Karabakh and Armenia, and all this is accompanied by incessant violations of the ceasefire agreement and rejection of the mechanism for the investigation of such violations.

Moreover, the statement of the Azerbaijani representative is in stark contrast with the spirit of the declarations of the Presidents of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair States. It is also worth noting that the representative of Azerbaijan did not even recognize the role of the Co-Chairs and their contribution to the peace process as it was repeatedly underscored by the members of the Security Council during the briefing. Armenia will further support the OSCE Co-Chairs in their efforts towards a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

The recent pardoning and glorification of the murderer Ramil Safarov by the President of Azerbaijan was an appalling yet not isolated case, which seriously harmed the negotiation process. This unprecedented promotion and manifestation of racism and hate crimes on the state level has created a culture of impunity and Armenophobia in that country.

The failure to deliver on the already taken commitments in the framework of the Minsk Group negotiations does not stand alone on Azerbaijan's track record. The subversive and terrorist actions on the bordering areas with Armenia and the Nagorno Karabakh Republic reveal Azerbaijan's true intention to keep the situation explosive on the line of contact and borders. These days, Azerbaijan continues its irresponsible actions by launching attacks against civilian health-care facilities, schools and kindergartens, as well as threats against civilian aircraft.

Tangible progress will be possible only when Azerbaijan abandons its illusion that it is possible to resolve the Nagorno Karabakh issue by force and shows political will to move towards a peaceful resolution and prepare its population for peace. The realization of the right of people to self-determination and the establishment of the final status of Nagorno Karabakh through the legally binding free expression of will are among the basic principles of conflict resolution.

Until that happens, the people of Nagorno Karabakh are still entitled to exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms as does every other nation in the world. Their right to life, to liberty and security, right to choose representatives, and freedom of movement cannot be hijacked by the attempts to stigmatize and isolate them from the international community.

Armenia welcomed the statements on the settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict by the Presidents of Russia, the United States and France at the summits in L'Aquila (2009), Muskoka (2010), Deauville (2011) and Los Cabos (2012) and clearly stated its readiness to move forward on the basis of the principles and elements contained in those statements, thus reaffirming that our approaches are fully in line with those of the international community.

Conflict resolution is possible once all parties concerned abandon violence as a means to achieve their goals and show political will to move towards peace and reconciliation. Hence, the support expressed by Minister Kozhara to the agreed formats will be an important contribution towards a political settlement of all conflicts in the OSCE area.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Garen **Nazarian**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative